



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

SW
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/963,909	09/26/2001	Christian Lorenz	TRW(ASG)5930	9434
26294	7590	12/18/2003	EXAMINER	
TAROLLI, SUNDHEIM, COVELL & TUMMINO L.L.P. 526 SUPERIOR AVENUE, SUITE 1111 CLEVEVLAND, OH 44114			VAN PELT, BRADLEY J	
		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER	
		3682		

DATE MAILED: 12/18/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/963,909	Applicant(s) LORENZ, CHRISTIAN
Examiner	Art Unit	
Bradley J Van Pelt	3682	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 16 October 2003.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-7 and 9-13 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) 5,6 and 9-12 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) 13 is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-4 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) 7 is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____ .
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____ . 6) Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

2. Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Donde et al. (SU 1435501 A).

Donde et al. disclose a vehicle steering wheel comprising: a hub (1), a steering wheel rim (3), and at least one spoke (6) having at least one spoke section, a skeleton (2) for said steering wheel rim and said spoke, said skeleton being interrupted in a radial direction between said spoke section and said steering wheel rim to define radial inner and radial outer skeleton parts separated and distanced from each other so that immediate force transmission in a radial direction within said skeleton is interrupted, and a vibration-decoupling means (4) bridging a distance between said skeleton parts and attaching said skeleton parts to each other, said vibration-decoupling means acting in all directions and at least largely isolating said steering wheel rim in terms of vibrations from said at least one section of said spoke; said vibration-decoupling means is provided at a transition point of said spoke to said steering wheel rim;

said vibration-decoupling means is provided inside said spoke and separates spoke sections from each other in terms of vibrations;

 said vibration-decoupling means is formed by a bearing;

3. Claims 1-4 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Schuler (USPN 6,494,114).

 Schuler discloses a vehicle steering wheel comprising: a hub (5), a steering wheel rim (25), and at least one spoke (7) having at least one spoke section, a skeleton (21) for said steering wheel rim and said spoke, said skeleton being interrupted in a radial direction between said spoke section and said steering wheel rim to define radial inner and radial outer skeleton parts separated and distanced from each other so that immediate force transmission in a radial direction within said skeleton is interrupted, and a vibration-decoupling means (23 and 19) bridging a distance between said skeleton parts and attaching said skeleton parts to each other, said vibration-decoupling means acting in all directions and at least largely isolating said steering wheel rim in terms of vibrations from said at least one section of said spoke;

 said vibration-decoupling means is provided at a transition point of said spoke to said steering wheel rim;

 said vibration-decoupling means is provided inside said spoke and separates spoke sections from each other in terms of vibrations;

 said vibration-decoupling means is formed by a bearing.

4. Claims 1-4 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Schuler (USPN 6,443,030).

Schuler discloses a vehicle steering wheel comprising: a hub (3), a steering wheel rim (5), and at least one spoke (7) having at least one spoke section, a skeleton (17) for said steering wheel rim and said spoke, said skeleton being interrupted in a radial direction between said spoke section and said steering wheel rim to define radial inner and radial outer skeleton parts separated and distanced from each other so that immediate force transmission in a radial direction within said skeleton is interrupted, and a vibration-decoupling means (21 and 23) bridging a distance between said skeleton parts and attaching said skeleton parts to each other, said vibration-decoupling means acting in all directions and at least largely isolating said steering wheel rim in terms of vibrations from said at least one section of said spoke; said vibration-decoupling means is provided at a transition point of said spoke to said steering wheel rim;

said vibration-decoupling means is provided inside said spoke and separates spoke sections from each other in terms of vibrations (see fig. 5);

said vibration-decoupling means is formed by a bearing.

Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claim 7 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

6. Claim 13 is allowed.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments filed October 16, 2003 have been fully considered, but they are not persuasive. The applicant argues the Donde reference does not anticipate the instant invention.

Art Unit: 3682

Further, the Donde reference does not disclose inner and outer radial skeleton parts, which are separated and distanced from each other so that immediate force transmission within the skeleton is interrupted. In terms of this limitation the structure of the Donde reference and the instant invention are not distinguishable. In the Donde reference an inner skeleton part and an outer skeleton part are separated and distanced from each other (the applicant has not limited the orientation of radial inner and outer relative to the orientation of the hub). Therefore, the Donde reference anticipates this limitation.

Conclusion

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Testa (USPN 6,282,982), and Imaizumi et al. (USPN 6,651,526).

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Bradley J Van Pelt whose telephone number is 703.305.8176. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 7:00-4:30, 2nd F 7:00-3:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David A Bucci can be reached on 703.308.3668. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703.872.9326.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703.308.2168.

BJVP



DAVID A. BUCCI
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600